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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000203

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DEPARTMENT FOR CA/VO, EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2017

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [CPAS](#) [KFRD](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BX](#)

SUBJECT: BRUNEI (ALMOST) READY TO SIGN TERRORIST SCREENING
INFO SHARING MOU

REF: A. FRIEDMAN-FRELICK E-MAILS OF 6/27 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. STATE 83571

[1](#)C. BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 69

Classified By: DCM Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The GoB is ready to sign an HSPD-6 Memorandum of Understanding to share terrorist screening information with the USG. The Foreign Ministry is looking to a high level meeting as a hook to push the Brunei bureaucracy to give approval to the text as it currently stands. The GoB says it is still on track to begin issuing new e-passports in September to bring it back into full compliance with Visa Waiver Program requirements. The new passports will also address a current weakness in tracking lost & stolen passports (LASP). Brunei would prefer to share LASP data informally with the USG via its Washington Embassy. Post recommends we delay a formal request for LASP sharing until after an HSPD-6 MoU is signed to avoid overloading the GOB bureaucracy and so further delaying an HSPD-6 agreement. END SUMMARY.

HSPD-6 MOU Text at Ad Ref

[1](#)2. (C) DCM negotiated an ad ref text of an HSPD-6 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GoB on June 27 (ref A). The GoB interagency team consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MoFAT), the MoFAT Research Department (external intelligence and analytical service), Internal Security Department (internal intelligence service), Police, Immigration Department, and Attorney General's Chambers agreed to the final USG changes and will soon provide us with a cleaned up document for final Washington review.

NEED A HOOK TO SIGN

[1](#)3. (C) On July 3, Dato Shofry Ghafor, the dual-hatted Permanent Secretary of MoFAT and Director of the Research Department told the Ambassador that he had been able to move the sluggish Brunei bureaucracy forward on the MoU based on the deadline of the on-again, off-again meeting between President Bush and Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah. (At this time no such meeting is on the schedule.) Shofry cautioned that

without the deadline of some kind of high-level meeting, it would be difficult for him to push the Attorney General's Chambers to give final clearance on the ad ref text.

E-PASSPORT COMING

¶4. (U) During the negotiations for the MoU, the GoB confirmed that it is still on track to begin issuing e-passports in September of this year (ref C). Assistant Director of the Immigration Department Azmi Hafneh told DCM that the new passports would have unique passport numbers, a change from the old practice of using the Brunei citizen's personal identity card (IC) number as his/her passport number. This old system created confusion when dealing with lost and stolen passports as the new passports would have the same number as the lost/stolen passport. The only difference between passports was the new issuance date. The new passports will also contain the IC number as well, but will have unique passport numbers.

OK IN PRINCIPLE ON LASP DATA SHARE

¶5. (C) In response to ref B, the Immigration Department informed us that the GoB routinely informs INTERPOL of all lost and stolen passports (LASP). On a monthly basis, the Immigration department forwards new LASP data to all Brunei Embassies. In response to our request to be included on distribution for this data, Assistant Director Azmi said that in principle, the Immigration Department would have no objection to sharing this information with the USG. However,

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his preferred method would be to have the Brunei Embassy in Washington provide the data directly and informally to the Department.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Post believes that Brunei embassy officials in Washington will be reluctant to share LASP data without specific instruction from MoFAT. Given our experience negotiating the HSPD-6 MoU, a formal approach for LASP data sharing would likely be confused by the GOB bureaucracy with the HSPD-6 MoU, complicate GoB consideration of the HSPD-6 MoU, and slow down securing the final GoB approval. We recommend finalizing the HSPD-6 MoU and establishing a track record of data sharing before making a more formal pitch for LASP data sharing.

SKODON